

THE STERLING HERALD

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CLOTHED WITH KINDNESS

By: Justin Berss

"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." (Colossians 3:12-14)

In the context of Colossians, these Christians have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him to a new life (Colossians 2:12). In this chapter, Paul calls upon his audience to put off the old man and put on the new man in Christ. The phrase that Paul uses is the idea of changing a set of clothes. Someone once described this as putting off the garments of the grave and putting on garments of grace.

In this article, I would like to discuss the concept of being clothed with kindness.

The concept of kindness is simple and is a trait that almost needs no definition. Kindness is the quality of being thoughtful, considerate, gracious, and generous. While the concept of kindness is easy to understand, it isn't effortless. Kindness is under siege in our country. We live in an age and culture where people can be harsh and cold rather than kind. Just turn on the news and watch the ads politicians produce to attack their opponent's character. In a world that can be cold and harsh, Christians are called to kindness. And true, engaged kindness takes effort.

Have you ever considered what happens to our relationships when we clothe ourselves with kindness?

First, kindness can "disarm" others. What do I mean by that? Let me offer an illustration. On Monday morning, I went to get my brakes fixed at Big O Tires. While I was sitting in the waiting room, a customer came to the counter and was terribly upset that she had been waiting so long for her tires. You could hear it in the tone of her voice. But the employee who was helping her responded with kindness and apologized. His kindness immediately "disarmed" this woman as suddenly her tone and her words changed.

That was an incredible illustration to me of the transformative power of kindness. It not only transforms my attitude, but it can also impact my interactions with others. When we respond to hurtful words with kindness, it has the potential to soften the heart of the other person.

Kindness can also bring perspective. Many times, when someone may be cold or harsh, it may simply be a symptom of an underlying problem. When I choose kindness, I am not saying that hurtful words are acceptable. I am choosing to see things from their perspective rather than taking things personally.

FAMILY MATTERS

For example, say you are driving down the road and someone speeds in front of you and cuts you off. Again, choosing to respond with kindness isn't saying that action is acceptable. It is saying maybe there is more going on than I know! Kindness chooses to give others the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they are in a rush to get to the hospital because a loved one is in critical condition? Maybe they just found out they lost their job? Maybe there was an emergency at home? The possibilities are endless, but kindness challenges us to step into the other person's shoes and consider what they might be going through.

Ultimately, kindness makes me like Christ. There has never been a greater demonstration of kindness than what we see in Christ Jesus. He gave His life on Calvary for people who mocked Him, ridiculed Him, beat Him, stoned Him, and ultimately murdered Him. When we choose kindness in the face of opposition, the world may laugh and consider it as weakness. But remember that you are showing yourself to be like Jesus who is the embodiment of kindness.

I am reminded of a hymn we sing at times, "Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen." Consider the second stanza of that hymn:

"When somebody has been so unkind to you, some word spoken that pierces you thru and thru, think how He was beguiled, spat upon and reviled, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you."

In a world where kindness is under siege, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you this week as you put on a heart of kindness.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Continue to be praying for Linda Adams as she discovered she has COVID-19. Pray also for her family as some of them also have this virus.
- Remember Gene McClung in your prayers. He will be or has already started radiation for prostate cancer.
- Please pray for Elizabeth Matthews and her grandson who is currently serving our country in Afghanistan. As someone who has been overseas, I know that is difficult for a family to go through.
- Please keep praying for Norman and Berdyne's great niece, Sandlyn Fultz. Sandlyn recently had back surgery at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

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